



**Collective Effort:**  
Eli Broad in front  
of artwork by  
Charline von Heyl  
at his office in  
Century City.

RINGO H.W. CHIU/LABJ

# Filling in Frame

Eli Broad touts new museum as another foundation in buildup of downtown L.A.

By **MARNI USHEROFF**  
*Staff Reporter*

**W**HEN **Eli Broad's** eponymous contemporary art museum opens in downtown Los Angeles next week,

it will be a monument to some 2,000 pieces the billionaire and his wife, Edythe, spent four decades amassing.

But it will also be the next major step in building out Grand Avenue and establishing the critical mass that supporters hope will further revitalize the northern end of downtown by drawing more residents to live nearby and more locals and tourists to patronize the area.

"It helps enhance or cement the fact that Grand Avenue is a cultural and civic district for a region of 15 million people," said Broad, 82, rattling off a list of the institutions that dot the strip, from Walt Disney Concert Hall to the **Museum of Contemporary Art** and the Music Center. "We're going to see more and more people coming downtown, more people moving downtown."

The Broads' gift of the museum exceeds \$2 billion, including \$140 million to build the honeycomb-veiled structure, a \$200 million-plus endowment that will generate more than \$12 million annually to finance the museum's operations and, of course, the value of the art itself.

Flanked by an outdoor plaza on one side and Disney Concert Hall on the other, the museum is across Grand from MOCA.

Art critic **Edward Goldman** contends the Broad is integral to the local cultural explosion that's seeing the contemporary art scene's center of gravity shift from the East Coast to the West.

"Los Angeles is to New York today what New York used to be for Paris after World War II," Goldman said, quoting an L.A. art dealer who'd moved from the Big Apple.

He thinks the Broad, paired with neighboring MOCA, will be an international draw.

"The Broad collection is not only large it's major artists,

major names, major work," he said. "One of the most important private collections shaped in the U.S. in the last decades and

now exhibited in a museum, which is as ambitious in terms of the architecture as the collection itself."

**Opening Up:**  
Entryway at  
Broad Museum  
in downtown  
Los Angeles.





**Carol Schatz**, chief executive of the **Downtown Center Business Improvement District**, thinks the proximity of the Broad and MOCA, what she calls two "world-class institutions," will draw international cultural tourists in particular.

"They'll spend money in restaurants and they will go to other attractions not only downtown but in the area," said Schatz, who's also chief executive of business advocacy group **Central City Association of Los Angeles**.

Broad has already seen interest in the museum from around the world. He noted that reporters from France, Germany and the United Kingdom will be attending the press conference this week previewing the museum before its Sept. 20 opening, not to mention several major Chinese collectors who will travel to the opening.

"People are beginning to understand that we're no longer a cultural desert; we're a cultural oasis," Broad said, referencing the symphony, opera, local theater scene and more than a half-dozen art museums.

#### Homebuilder's art home

The philanthropist, who made his fortune building **KB Home** and **SunAmerica Inc.**, had originally hinted his treasure-trove of contemporary art, which includes works by **Jeff Koons**, **Cindy Sherman** and **Robert Rauschenberg**, might end up in one or more museums.

But in 2008, just a month before the Broad Museum for Contemporary Art opened at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, he stunned many when news broke that he would retain his works.

After receiving offers to build his independent museum in Beverly Hills, Santa Monica and Culver City, Broad ultimately settled on Grand Avenue in 2010, choosing New York-based **Diller Scofidio + Renfro** to design a 120,000-square-foot space and the Santa Monica offices of **Gensler** as executive architect.

The finished structure has 50,000 square feet of gallery space and a storage vault visible to visitors through windows in a central stairwell, notable features considering Broad had previously bristled at the thought of his collection mostly languishing in storage.

Ultimately, the museum endowment ended up being slightly larger than Broad had expected including an extra "margin of safety" for future growth, he said.

"It includes money for future purchases," Broad said in an interview at his Century City offices, its walls decked with works by **Ed Ruscha** and **Charline von Heyl**. "Or we may give the museum money for future purchases, separate from the endowment."

The building will also house the **Broad Art Foundation**, which lends out art world-wide to other institutions.

Broad envisions the museum continuing to purchase artwork after he's gone, though there's no specific plan as to what that will look like. Acquisitions still continue apace, with the museum announcing over the summer it had added 50 works over the past year, on par with what the foundation has been adding annually.

"It will be a living institution and a very public institution," Broad added, citing perpetual free admission with the exception of private exhibitions and the Un-Private Collection series of cultural talks at the museum's 200-person lecture hall.

#### Burgeoning boulevard

On the outdoor plaza, former French Laundry chef **Timothy Hollingsworth** and **Bill Chalt's Sprout Restaurant Group** are developing Otium, a new restaurant that should open by the end of next month.

Broad, who's long championed the Grand Avenue renaissance, said the next piece of the puzzle to fall in place will hopefully be **Related Cos.' Frank Gehry-designed**

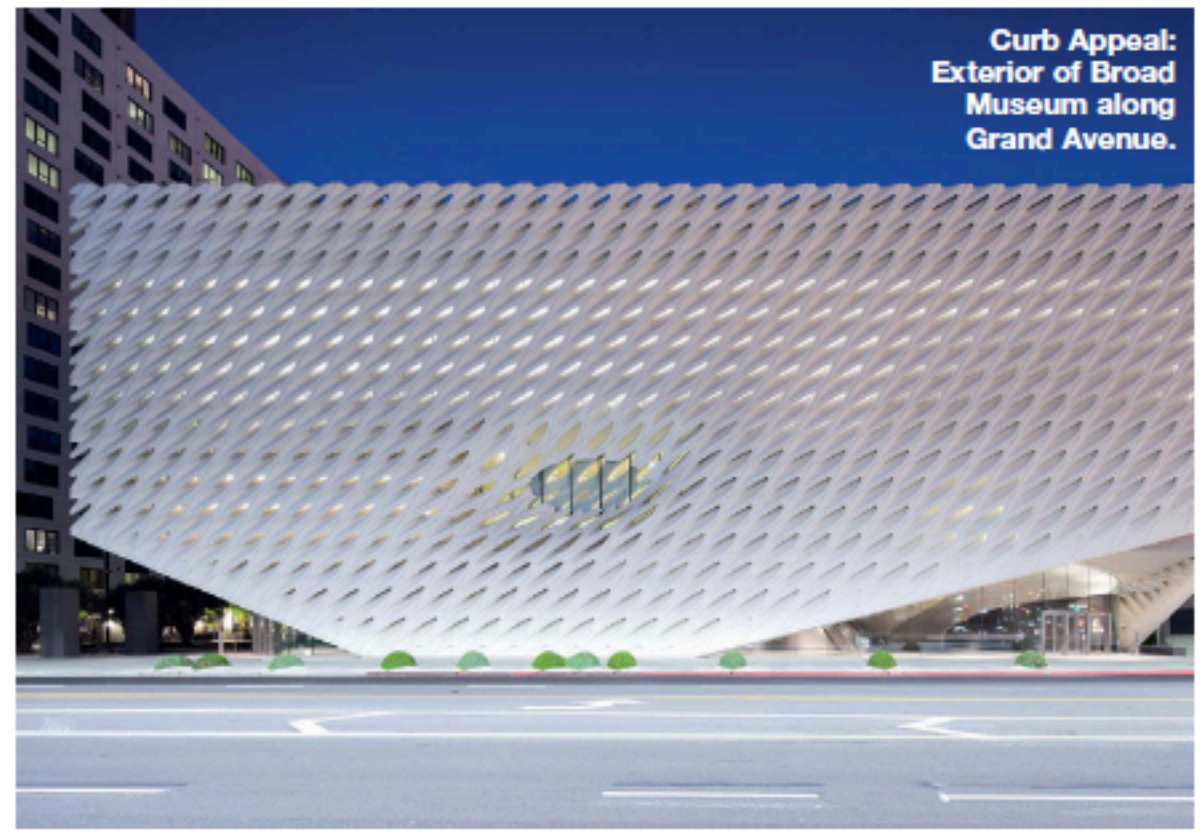
mixed-use development opposite the Disney Concert Hall.

This final phase of the so-called Grand Avenue Project, a decade in the making, is set to include luxury apartments, restaurants, retail and a four-star hotel. Initially stymied by the recession, New York-based **Related** plans on breaking ground by the end of next year. It should also contribute several million dollars to the Broad Museum per a city ordinance mandating that arts fees be gathered from developers as mitigation for new construction.


"It'll all add to the critical mass on Grand Avenue," Broad said of the development. "You're going to have several thousand housing units, a hotel, interesting retail, supposedly about 10 additional restaurants."

Beyond the mixed-use complex, he hopes adjacent parcels will be developed for rentals and condominiums in the future.

"We need more population downtown," he said. "It's happening."



**Curb Appeal:**  
Exterior of Broad  
Museum along  
Grand Avenue.



## His philosophy?

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